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### ***published in***

Cahiers Politiestudies

2010

### ***document version***

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

### ***citation for published version (APA)***

van Steden, R., & Jones, T. (2010). Explaining the growth of plural policing: comparing the Netherlands and Britain. *Cahiers Politiestudies*, 16(3), 289-306.

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# Explaining the growth of plural policing: Comparing the Netherlands and Britain

Ronald van Steden and Trevor Jones<sup>1</sup>

*The past quarter century has seen a significant growth of interest in ‘plural’ policing. This relates, in part, to the very substantial expansion of private, predominantly commercial, security guards worldwide that has occurred in recent decades. However, the notion of plural policing also includes a range of other policing authorizers and providers, located within public, private or third sectors (or a mix thereof). Much of the writing on the pluralization of policing has focused primarily on trends in North America. There is a tendency to assume that the nature and degree of changes in policing are similar around the globe. However, research suggests that there are very different patterns of change in various parts of the world. It remains the case that little is known about the specific conditions that shape plural policing, and how these differ between national contexts. This paper explores the growth of plural policing within two EU countries – the Netherlands and Britain. It discusses areas of similarity and difference, and speculates about what factors might explain these. It suggests that changes in the policing systems of both countries can be related to a growing ‘formalization’ of social control, and to the distinctive political cultures and institutions in each country.*

Key words: plural policing, private security, formalization of social control, cross-national research, Britain, the Netherlands.

## 1. Introduction

Since the Second World War, and most visibly over the past twenty-five years, security industries have been expanding around the globe. The privileged position of the public police in patrolling, surveillance and investigation has been increasingly challenged by commercial, providers (de Waard, 1999; van Dijk & de Waard, 2001; van Steden & Sarre, 2007). In addition, other forms of security provision – public, private and community organised – have proliferated on the policing landscape (Crawford, Lister, Blackburn & Burnett, 2005; Jones & Newburn, 2006a). Although the growing importance of private security is widely recognized, the industry remains surprisingly under-researched. We know very little about what private security contains and its effects on the ‘governance of security’ (Johnston & Shearing, 2003; Wood & Dupont, 2006). We know even less about the other forms of plural policing that have emerged in recent decades. This underlines the need for a more comprehensive understanding of what factors explain the emergence of plural policing. Furthermore, despite recent important Anglo-American publications on the conceptual and practical aspects of plural policing, there remains a striking lack of continental European research on this phenomenon. Academic thinking about plural policing is heavily suffused with Anglophone – predominantly U.S.A. and Canadian – insights (Brogden, 1987; Manning, 2005). Nevertheless, it has been recognized that knowledge from other countries is of major importance for better grasping the similarities and differences between national contexts, and to gain deeper insights into developments in jurisdictions worldwide (Jones & Newburn,

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2006b; Mawby, 1999). Scholarly work from outside English-speaking nations has much to contribute – theoretically, empirically and normatively – to a more subtle and nuanced view of what is happening to policing today.

This paper compares developments in plural policing in two European countries, the Netherlands and Britain<sup>2</sup>. The selection of countries partly rests on pragmatic considerations: the Netherlands and Britain are two nations where a significant body of work in the area of plural policing has been undertaken and where both authors, given their nationalities, have most knowledge of. However, there are also other compelling reasons why comparison between the two countries is useful. Both jurisdictions exhibit strong similarities with regard to long-standing democratic traditions, the existence of regional police systems and rapid expansions of private security industries. On the other hand, there are important contrasts that make cross-national comparisons especially interesting and informative. Divergence in political and legal institutions, economic conditions, historical backgrounds and cultural values are likely to play a fundamental role in shaping distinctive national pathways and outcomes. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we provide a general account of plural policing in the Netherlands and Britain. The following section highlights some key factors, drawn from the existing literature on plural policing that might help to explain present trends. These factors include growing concerns about crime and security, the fiscal crisis of the public police, the growth of mass private property, government policies toward private sector participation, and the formalization of social control. The third section highlights the differences found between the Netherlands and Britain, and suggests possible explanations of these. The final section draws some general conclusions and reflects on the importance of legal and political context in shaping developments in policing systems.

## **2. Plural policing in the Netherlands and England & Wales**

‘Pluralization’ of policing refers to a number of distinct developments. The focus here is upon three key elements of plural policing: the commercial security sector, other forms of policing provision, and ‘marketization’ of the public policing sector. We here outline recent developments in these aspects of plural policing in the Netherlands and England & Wales.

### **2.1 Commercial policing**

The Netherlands Statistics Bureau (*Centraal Bureau for Statistiek; CBS*)<sup>3</sup> provides a snapshot of the Dutch private security industry at large, but does not distinguish between miscellaneous aspects of security work. CBS introduced the occupational category ‘guarding and investigation services’ only in 1994/1995, which makes it impossible to analyse longer term trends. However, it is possible to obtain some notion of trends by drawing upon past editions of *Security Yearbooks*, based on annual reports and license figures collected by the Dutch Ministry of Justice which go back as far as the early 1980s. In addition, the Dutch private security association (VPB) collates figures which are generally seen as the most up-to-date and comprehensive collection of statistics based on surveys of private security companies registered by VPB. Though the number of 60 VPB-members is compared to the

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<sup>2</sup> The focus is exclusively on England and Wales, as is the case for the majority of academic writing on British policing. This is because the legal and policing systems of Scotland and Northern Ireland both differ in important respects from those in England and Wales, and there is not sufficient space in the current paper to consider developments in all three separate jurisdictions of the United Kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics are on-line available from Statline: <http://statline.cbs.nl/statweb/>.

industry's total size fairly small, outcomes are still valid as they represent all serious players covering about 70 percent of the market. Taken together, these figures show a substantial private security industry in the Netherlands, and one that has exhibited significant growth in recent times. There were 1,380 licensed private security organisations in 2006 compared to 380 in 1995. Notwithstanding this official number of licenses issued, the private security industry estimates that approximately 800 businesses (2003 figures) are active in the market of which 250 to 400 have a sizeable presence. The number of contract guard employees has grown from 4,348 (1981) to almost 31,000 (2008)<sup>4</sup>. The gross annual turnover of the private guarding sector has grown from €429 million in 1994 to €1.45 billion in 2008 (van Steden, 2007).

Turning to Britain, various studies have provided evidence that the commercial security sector has expanded substantially over recent decades (Crawford *et al.*, 2005; George & Button, 2000; Jones & Newburn, 1995, 1998). In 1951, there were about 67,000 people employed as security guards and related occupation, which had grown to over 200,000 by 1991 (Jones & Newburn, 2006). Crawford *et al.* (2005) estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 people are employed in the private security industry. According to 2003 figures, the manned guarding sector estimated annual turnover was over €2.4 billion (£1.8 billion), “nearly a threefold increase on the figure 10 years earlier and some 14 times greater than the total 20 years previously” (Crawford *et al.*, 2005, p. 13). Industry reports suggest a market size of over €3.5 billion (£2.6 billion) generated by those working in security guarding and related.<sup>5</sup>

There are important differences between the extent and nature of private policing in the two countries. For example, whilst both countries have seen significant growth in commercial policing, the British security industry, with 275 guarding personnel per 100,000 population, is much bigger than its Dutch counterpart (187 per 100,000 population), both in absolute terms and in proportion to population size. Furthermore, the commercial security sector has a greater functional and spatial remit in Britain than is the case in the Netherlands (Jones, van Steden & Boutellier, 2009). Governments in Britain have been more radical in privatizing policing and related functions than they have been in the Netherlands. At the same time, statutory regulation of the commercial security industry has been a long-standing feature of the Netherlands, but was only introduced from 2004 in Britain. These issues will be considered in more detail below.

## 2.2 Other forms of policing provision

In addition to the growth of private security, policing has been pluralized by the emergence of new forms of police (and other) patrol provision. In part, these new policing forms have arisen in response to growing commercial involvement in the provision of security, and governmental attempts to meet growing public demands upon public policing. In the Netherlands, a new form of police patrol rank – the ‘police patroller’ (*politie-surveillant*) – was established in 1990 to undertake surveillance functions (Haube, Hofstra, Toornvliet & Zandbergen, 1996). In a similar way in Britain the Police Reform Act of 2002 established a new ‘patrol’ rank in the police service (‘Police Community Support Officer’ or PCSO),

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<sup>4</sup> It is likely that the number of private security guards active in the Netherlands is even greater than this, given the employment figures provided by Group 4 Securicor (8,500), Trigion (over 7,000) and Securitas (5,400), the three leading companies in the Netherlands (Terpstra & van Steden, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> See: [www.keynote.co.uk/market-intelligence/view/product/1492/security-industry](http://www.keynote.co.uk/market-intelligence/view/product/1492/security-industry).

intended to provide a 'second tier' of policing. By mid-2005, there were over 6,300 PCSOs working with police forces in England & Wales. Other forms of patrol provision have emerged organized by local government and other bodies. In the Netherlands, municipalities can appoint uniformed 'city wardens' (*stadswachten*) in urban areas. What started as a project for long-term unemployed in 1989 has expanded, with about several thousands of such personnel currently employed in Dutch cities. Nowadays, several City Surveillance Services (*Diensten Stadtoezicht*) around the Netherlands are professionalizing their operational staff. New occupations like city supervisors and order maintainers (*gemeentelijke toezichthouders en handhavers*), mandated to fine people for 'minor' offences, occupy an increasingly prominent position in the Dutch policing landscape. Similar to traditional *stadswachten*, forms of municipally-employed uniform patrollers have emerged in the UK, most recently via the national 'neighbourhood wardens' programme (Crawford, 2008). In recent years, neighbourhood watch schemes have been set up around the Netherlands. Moroccan 'community fathers' (*Marokkaanse buurtvaders*), for example, have become famous for their work to promote safer neighbourhoods in Amsterdam and The Hague. Their primary goals are to forestall public nuisance caused by anti-social behaviour among Moroccan youth and to establish fruitful contacts with their parents. In Britain there have also been developments in policing 'below' the level of state government. A number of authors have highlighted the growth of 'citizen-led' policing including the expansion of neighbourhood watch since the early 1980s, and more recent forms of citizen patrolling (Button, 2002; Johnston, 1992).

### **2.3 The 'marketization' of public policing**

Public policing in both countries has become more complex, with the 'marketization' of state police forces. These developments were initially driven by political concerns about the dramatic growths in expenditure on the police and a desire to promote 'value for money'. The Dutch police have enjoyed sizeable investments in terms of funding and staff numbers over recent years. Expenditure on police regions went up from nearly 2000 to about 3500 million euros over the last 14 years, and staffing has expanded considerably over the past decade or so to about 53,000 of which 36,000 is operational (220 staff per 100,000 population) at present. These significant investments in public police organizations have not allayed ongoing public concerns about crime and insecurity, and the visibility of police on the street. The same period also saw a significant expansion in police staffing and resources in England & Wales. In 1993, the number of police officers was about 128,000. This number expanded to record levels of about 143,000 in 2006. The equivalent figures for total police staff (including civilian administrative and support staff) is 178,000 in 1993, growing to 228,000 (350 police officers per 100,000 population) in 2006. But despite record increases in police staffing and resources, as in the Netherlands, there remains substantial political and public concerns about crime and insecurity, and persistent official criticism of the police for the way in which these increased resources have been used. There have been ongoing debates in both countries about the 'core tasks' of the police and how to deliver them most effectively (Morgan & Newburn, 1997; van der Vijver, Meershoek & Slobbe, 2001). There has been an increasing emphasis in both Britain and in the Netherlands on the rigorous measurement of police performance and the imposition of centrally-set performance targets. In Britain this dates back to the early 1980s, but has really gathered pace since the late 1990s as part of a broader driver to 'modernise' public services under New Labour governments. Whilst a form of these developments has also emerged in the Netherlands, they are less radical in their extent and in their fundamental nature (Jones et al, 2009). The Dutch government has introduced targets, which translate into contracts about the number of fines to be imposed. In large part, however, police work is unquantifiable, especially when it comes to valuable interactions between officers and citizens (Hoogenboezem & Hoogenboezem, 2006).

### 3. Explanations for the growth of plural policing

A number of common factors appear to have contributed to the pluralization of policing in the Netherlands and Britain. These include growing concerns about crime and security, fiscal crisis of the public police, the growth of mass private property, government privatization policies, and the formalization of social control. We discuss each factor in turn below.

#### 3.1 Growing concerns about crime and security

A commonsense explanation for proliferation of policing forms is the growth of crimes in western society. Although recorded and reported crime have been falling in both Britain and the Netherlands since the mid- to late-1990s, with a longer timeframe, the picture looks very different. For example, between the 1960s and 2007, the number of crime reported to the police in the Netherlands has increased by nearly ten times from about 130,000 to 1.2 million cases. However, it is doubtful whether recorded crime rates are pervasive predictors for shifts in private security. The period of most rapid expansion occurred at a time of stabilization of crime rates. Moreover, in the past few years, crime rates have fallen (Wittebrood & Nieuwebeerta, 2006). Of more relevance than actual crime victimisation is perhaps the constant awareness and fear of crime (and disorder) due to, for example, media coverage (Vanderveen, 2006). Thus, the emergence of plural forms of policing may be seen as a general response to growing demands for security provision, related in part to perceptions of disorder and incivilities (Pastor, 2003). However, the empirical evidence for this argument is weak. Surveys indicate that (strong) feelings of insecurity are currently at the lowest level ever: 22 percent of the Dutch population recently reported to feel occasionally unsafe, with 3 percent often feel unsafe<sup>6</sup>. In Britain, policy-makers have been faced with what Crawford et al. (2005) refer to as a 'reassurance paradox': "*as general crime risks have declined, so perceptions of victimisation risks have increased*" (p. 2). Despite falling crime rates, anxieties about crime and anti social behaviour have continued to grow. This suggests that the growth of plural policing may have more to do with generalized insecurity than crime problems per se<sup>7</sup>. 'Fear of crime' may be a proxy for a wide array of diverse and often unconnected social anxieties, such as dog dirt in the streets, Islamic fundamentalism, unruly youngsters, to uncertainties about the future. This has been related to the advent of a 'high modern' (Giddens, 1990), 'reflexive' (Beck, 1992), 'liquid' (Bauman, 2000) or 'networked' (Castells, 2000) world in which risk and uncertainty are endemic features. This is ironic because, compared to the past, or to developing countries, we actually enjoy unprecedented opportunities for living comfortable and rewarding lives (Furedi, 2002). Yet, according to Boutellier (2004), this extraordinary sense of personal freedom is exactly what triggers today's (moral) panic: the vibrancy of liberal lifestyles runs up against the need to set boundaries. Thus, paradoxically, the flipside of expanding prosperity and freedom is a widespread sense of increasing fragility and insecurity, which manifests itself in demands for more security provision.

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<sup>6</sup> These figures are drawn from the most recent annual National Safety Monitor (see: [www.cbs.nl](http://www.cbs.nl)).

<sup>7</sup> The terrorist attacks in New York, London and Madrid have also not led in practice to an overall growth of private security. It may even be plausible to expect an impact in the opposite – public – direction. For example, after the 9/11 attacks, U.S. private security airport staff were accused of incompetence, which meant that their posts returned to state hands (Seidensat, 2004).

### 3.2 Fiscal crisis of the public police

One way of explaining the growth of alternative policing provision is to suggest that public expenditure restrictions have imposed financial constraints on police forces creating a 'fiscal vacuum' filled up with private security solutions. The expansion of contract guards, for example, could be reasonably taken to be "*an indication that those who hire such protection feel that public police protection is in some way inadequate*" (Becker 1973, p. 44). Radical (or Marxist) approaches of this theory see such crises as a natural law of capitalism, which undermines both state power and legitimacy (O'Conner, 1973). Regaining its position, the government accepts two-tiered – public and private – forms of policing that gradually interpenetrate the social fabric of society. While, at the surface, the state appears to be devolving power to corporations and civil society, in practice they are expanding their nets of social control (Cohen, 1985; Spitzer & Scull, 1977). Viewed through a 'liberal democratic' lens, however, the expansion of plural policing is a pragmatic and sensible approach to preventing crime and disorder. Private security companies and other plural policing bodies offer cheaper staff, who are 'junior partners' of the police in safeguarding the (quasi-)public domain (Button, 2002; Jones & Newburn, 1998). For both radical and liberal democratic approaches, however, the empirical evidence is problematic. It is unfeasible to maintain that the growth of plural forms of policing can be related to falling numbers of staff employed by Dutch or British police forces. On the contrary, the police in both countries have seen very significant staffing growth (see discussions on public policing above). However, given the constant political and social focus upon security issues (though not necessarily based on 'hard' crime figures) and demands for policing, it is possible to argue that the public police – even with the very significant expansion of staff and resources – have been unable to keep pace with the demands upon them. This has fuelled the growth both of commercial policing and of other forms of 'plural' policing provision.

### 3.3 The growth of mass private property

An important explanation for the expansion of the key element within plural policing – the private security industry – concerns large-scale changes in spatial ordering (Kempa, Stenning & Wood, 2004; Shearing & Stenning 1983). The urban environment is increasingly dominated by new forms of communal space such as fashionable shopping malls, restricted clubs and 'gated' residential areas that are publicly accessible but privately owned and managed. A direct result of this shift in property relations is that policing falls in the hands of 'private governments' (Macaulay, 1986) challenging the old Hobbesian-Weberian ideal "*where the public sphere is the sphere of governors and the private sphere is the sphere of the governed*" (Shearing, 2006, p. 31). Contract guards thus take the meaning of 'security' beyond that of a *threat* into a world of *promise* for those who can afford the delights of exclusive urban environments (Hadfield, 2008, p. 445; italics in the original). As such, new strategies of risk management have less to do with concerns of crime than they have with the governance of local 'moral orders'. Economic rationalities focus on the creation of attractive, consumer-friendly sites that represent both enclaves of freedom and networks of dense regulation (Valverde & Cirak, 2003). "*Control*", as Rose (2000, p.326) notes, "*is [therefore] better understood as operating through conditional access to circuits of consumption and civility; [...] recurrent switch points to be passed in order to access the benefits of liberty*". Considering the growth of plural policing in Britain and the Netherlands, there is some truth in these arguments. Although these kinds of spaces are much less common in Europe than in the USA, there have been significant developments particularly in the retail sector, which is a leading purchaser of private security staff and equipment. Data show that the amount of

systematically developed shopping (i.e., large neighbourhood and community centres) has doubled from 400 in the mid-1980s to 800 nowadays in the Netherlands<sup>8</sup>. British studies demonstrate analogous developments: between the 1970s and the mid-1990s, the number of shopping centres expanded from 200 to over 1,000. A declining proportion of such facilities were located in town centres, in chorus with burgeoning out-of-town retail complexes and ‘mega’ stores (Jones & Newburn, 1998, 1999).

However, the growth of mass property should not be taken as *the* key explanatory factor for private security growth (or more broadly, for plural policing). The appearance of mass private property – and wider (semi-)closed communal spaces – in the EU is relatively limited compared to the United States. The numbers of ‘gated communities’ comprising restricted private housing estates (Davis, 1990) and ‘edge cities’ (Garreau, 1992) accommodating concentrations of business, leisure and entertainment of the types found in the U.S. are very small in Europe. Whilst such developments are restricted in Britain, they are even less common in the Netherlands. Hypermarkets (such as Tesco’s) and gated housing developments – according to Crawford and Lister (2004), planning authorities identified around 1,000 gated communities in England – are less accepted and widespread than in Britain. A further problem with this argument is that private security growth predated the growth of mass private property in both countries. A final point relates to the fact that Dutch and British security industries are not routinely armed, in contrast with their counterparts in many parts of the USA who have the potential to deploy lethal force. Thus, whereas private security operations on this side of the Atlantic Ocean mirror in part developments in North America, they have their own idiosyncrasies that set them apart in some important ways.

### **3.4 Government policies toward private sector participation**

Garland (1996) has used the term ‘responsibilisation’ policies to denote processes whereby the government acknowledges its limited capacities to prevent and control crime, and seeks to devolve responsibility to other agencies and individuals. Thus, government policies of privatization and devolution of crime control more broadly may explain the ways in which policing systems in the Netherlands and Britain have been pluralized in recent decades. From the mid-eighties onwards, the Dutch government has emphasized partnership working in the sphere of crime control and justice. In this respect, the publication of the 1985 government report *Society and Crime (Samenleving en Criminaliteit)* advocated integration between repressive and pro-active policies, framing crime prevention as an ‘administrative problem’ for a range of organisations (Ministerie van Justitie, 1985). Some years later, in 1990, the policy program *Law in Motion (Recht in Beweging)* proposed the use of private security companies to patrol mass private properties like shopping centres and industrial complexes (Tweede Kamer 1990/1991). The same period saw the introduction of what has been termed an ‘integral safety policy’. This expanded the concept of crime prevention by connecting it to more general issues about quality of life in local areas and how these are influenced by a range of services including fire protection and emergency relief (Boutellier, 2001). As a result, crime control has become part of the broad safety domain that encompasses areas beyond the criminal justice system. The past few years have seen official acceptance of private security operations in public space (Ministerie van Justitie & Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, 2002). To date, however, the Dutch government has gone no further than, allowing the private sector to fulfil subordinate roles (to the public police) in the public realm. “*Safety policy, even if it is in private hands*”, Terpstra (2008a, p.224) notes, “is

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<sup>8</sup> These data draw on a database created by the Dutch Council of Shopping Centres (*Nederlandse Raad van Winkelcentra; NRW*): [www.nrw.nl](http://www.nrw.nl).



*fundamentally concerned with a public good*". Close oversight of the police and municipalities remains a key element of the Dutch approach to involving private security in public policing.

The acceptance of private security, and other forms of plural policing, in public safety policies has gone further in Britain. The government have used the term 'police extended family' to denote the deployment of non-police agents in public safety roles (Crawford & Lister, 2004; Johnston, 2003). This builds upon a much more radical approach to privatization in Britain, dating back to the Thatcher governments of the 1980s. Although this was applied relatively late to policing, 'marketization' policies have been a striking feature of police reform since the early 1990s, under both Conservative and Labour governments. In terms of direct privatization, prisoner escort for most prisoners is now delivered by contract security, and also civilian detention officers in some forces have been contracted-out to the market (Shefer & Liebling, 2008). The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act gave local authorities a statutory duty to promote, facilitate and coordinate crime and disorder reduction partnerships that entail state as well as non-state organisations. More recently, the British government launched a nation-wide 'neighbourhood warden' program committed to the revival of deprived urban public spaces. These programs signal a 'privatization of community policing' in the sense that they officially acknowledge the input of commercial patrols in safeguarding residential localities and alleviating individuals' reported fear of crime (Noaks, 2000, 2008). Turning to the Netherlands, while commercial security patrols in affluent residential enclaves have existed for many years, there has not been a general expansion of private policing on residential estates in middle and lower-income areas. Except from some (temporary and permanent) local initiatives, national political support for policies aimed at the direct stimulation of a 'mixed market' for patrol provision is virtually lacking. Another obvious contrast concerns the involvement of the Dutch private security industry in the area of penal and correctional institutions as discussed above. This involvement is remains comparatively restrained in the Netherlands. Although, as in Britain, the multinational company Group 4 Securicor (G4S) is involved in the provision of ancillary guarding and maintenance services, the issue of wholesale contracting-out of penal establishments has yet to appear on the Dutch policy agenda. 'Marketization mentalities' in the UK have gained much firmer ground than in the Netherlands.

A related point concerns governmental approaches to the regulation of private security. As noted above, the approaches of Britain and the Netherlands have been very different (Button, 2007; Button & George, 2006; van Steden & Sarre, 2007). The Netherlands has a long-standing tradition of licensing and regulating private security dating back over 70 years. The most recent form of regulatory law, the 1997 Private Security Providers and Detective Agencies Act (*Wet particuliere beveiligingsorganisaties en recherchebureaus*), strengthened the licensing, training and oversight system for private security companies and their employees. Proper enforcement of this law, for which the police and judicial services are responsible, is rather weak, however. The British private security industry remained largely unregulated up until the introduction of the 2001 Private Security Act that implemented compulsory licensing schemes for individuals working in specific parts of the security sector along with a voluntary registration scheme for companies. The Act established the Security Industry Authority (SIA)<sup>9</sup> to manage the licensing of contract security workers and firms. Experts expect that the new British licensing regime will push the working conditions and

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<sup>9</sup> See for more information: [www.the-sia.org.uk/home](http://www.the-sia.org.uk/home).

service delivery, as well as the costs incurred, upwards which is likely to slow down the burgeoning of private security to some degree (Crawford & Lister, 2004).

### 3.5 The formalization of social control

Whilst the pluralization of policing is often presented as a fragmentation of policing provision, there are compelling reasons to regard it more broadly as a product of formalization of previously informal types of social control. Following Jones and Newburn (2002), the activities of almost all aspects of ‘plural policing’ outlined earlier in the paper – that is those of the public police, private security industry and new forms of policing provision – can all be seen as part of ‘primary’ social control. By contrast, *secondary social controls* are delivered by agents such as teachers, park-keepers, caretakers, railway guards, bus conductors, etc. – for whom social control activities are not a primary part of their role, but form an important secondary aspect of what they do. At a less formal level again, *tertiary social control* includes informal social controls exerted by ‘intermediate’ groups within local communities, such as religious organizations, workplaces, trade unions, societies, and community groups.

We here argue that current trends in policing in both the Netherlands and in Britain can be related to the decline of more informal sources of social control. This relates in part to the general decline of ‘community’ institutions associated with tertiary controls, and highlighted by a range of authors in their analyses of the ‘disembedding’ processes of late modernity (see above discussion of the work of Giddens (1999), Bauman (2000) and others) . But subsequently there has been a marked decline of ‘secondary’ social control activities in terms of a range of occupations that once provided ‘natural surveillance’ and other low level controls in addition to their main functions (Jones & Newburn, 1998). It is possible to demonstrate the decline of such occupations in the UK via use of employment estimates from the population Census figures over the 1951 to 1991 period. Figures quoted in Jones and Newburn (2002) show a considerable expansion of employment in public policing (from 85,000 to 150,000 staff). These figures also show the very substantial increases in private security and related occupations discussed above (from 67,000 to at least 200,000 staff). But perhaps the key point is the evidence for the declining visibility of ‘secondary social control’ occupations such as ‘roundsmen/women’ (the house-to-house delivery of milk, bread and other goods), bus and tram conductors, rail ticket inspectors, and train guards. In particular, the number of bus and tram conductors suggests a quite dramatic fall from 97,000 (1951) to almost 2,500 (1991) staff due to public savings and new labour-saving technologies such as ticket machines. The Census figures thus suggest very substantial declines in these kinds of occupations, whilst ‘primary social control’ in the form of both public and private policing has expanded.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to obtain similarly detailed employment figures from the Netherlands Statistics Bureau. Our observations are therefore limited to anecdotal information. The rise in and diversity of new security patrols in the Netherlands may be best illustrated by the observation that, alongside the regular police, as many as thirteen to fifteen different types of policing occupations are active in some parts of Amsterdam (Terpstra, 2008b). In this respect, the employment of so-called ‘streetcoaches’ (*straatcoaches*) by the municipality of Amsterdam is an interesting example. These streetcoaches, provided by a private security firm, aim to tackle youth nuisance on the streets. They represent a team of security patrols and social workers whose main tasks are to exert social control, prevent disorder and visit the parents of troublemakers (van Steden & Jones, 2008). At the same time,

Terpstra (2008b, p.110) stresses that over the 1980s and 1990s, “*for reasons of cost reduction and financial cutbacks, many jobs which had primarily a service function but which in practice also had an important (informal, secondary) task of control and surveillance, were eliminated or cutback. Workers like caretakers, conductors, platform guards, and wardens in blocks of flats almost disappeared in those years*”. Hence, there is a strong recognition that, as an adverse consequence of this policy, the Dutch police increasingly rely on other social control agents such as city wardens and contract guards who have formed all sorts of relationships with public constabularies.

#### **4. Interpreting differences**

The documented changes in policing in the Netherlands and England & Wales – and, to differing degrees, similar developments in other parts of the world – do suggest that fundamental forces are at work. Most striking, the widespread ‘search for security’ (Law Commission of Canada, 2002), in Britain and the Netherlands alike, relates to wider changes in social and cultural configurations conducive to increasing insecurity and the growing politicization of crime control that put governments under pressure (Garland, 2000). Public authorities realize that the traditional judicial emphasis on prosecution, punishment and detention has its limitations. In particular police forces have helped to establish ‘preventative partnerships’, which create a whole new infrastructure of crime control beyond the institutional remits of the state (Hughes & Edwards, 2002; Loader, 2000; Terpstra & Kouwenhoven, 2004). Furthermore, in both countries, we observed a transfer of functions and responsibilities from the public to the private realm. Informal (primary and secondary) forms of social control have changed places with private security guards. It is plausible that this marked decline in informal social control is linked to public savings on behalf of occupations providing ‘natural surveillance’ (such as train conductors), but also that rapid rises in (fear of) crime have contributed to the formal policing division of labour and ‘exclusionary strategies’ towards deviants (Young, 1999). The argument that mass private property has stimulated private security growth is not so well supported outside of North America. It appears that developments such as those in the USA have been much more restricted in Britain and even less common again in the Netherlands.

Whilst parallel trajectories towards the ‘pluralization’ and ‘privatization’ of policing can be identified in the Netherlands and England & Wales, many important contrasts remain. The contrasts between the political institutions of both nations are surely crucial in this regard. Although similar in some ways to the UK, the Dutch political system comprises a sharply contrasting set of political institutions, shaped by a distinctive democratic tradition and political culture. This has important implications for the politics of policing in the Netherlands, and in our view is the prime explanation for some of the central differences between Dutch and British policing that we described previously. The UK is a common law country, with a ‘first past the post’ electoral system that has, for the majority of the last century or so, been dominated by two parties. This system is likely to produce clear governmental programmes between which the electorate can choose, and which the electorate can do little to resist in between elections. In stark contrast to Britain, in the Netherlands, social ‘pillarization’ was a vertical pluralism based on four distinct ideologies; a liberal pillar of middle-class secular citizens, pillars incorporating the Protestant and Catholic communities respectively, and finally a Social Democratic pillar incorporating the labour movement. Lijphart (1968) argued that rather than be a source of instability, pillarization was the key development that helped Dutch society remain relatively stable in the face of these fundamental social divisions. Social divisions can be offset by the existence of

accommodation, cooperation and compromise at the elite levels, realized by a distinctive set of political institutions and cultural traditions.

A resulting distinctive feature of the Dutch political system has been the tendency towards 'non-decision making' in the case of controversial or divisive issues. This is achieved by the appointment of an expert commission to deal with particular issues, which can take the political sting out of divisive matters by removing their discussion to the technical sphere. In a later edition of his book, Lijphart (1975) noted a process of 'de-pillarization' had developed in the Netherlands, with the autonomous pillars described above beginning to crumble during the 1960s. Society became increasingly secular, electoral behaviour became more volatile, many new non-pillarized organizations emerged, and there was less cohesiveness within the existing pillars (Lijphart, 1975). Such processes of de-pillarization have had major consequences for Dutch society, and in particular have been associated with a major decline in sources of informal social control, and increasing levels of crime and disorder. Nevertheless, even though recent years have seen major changes in the politics of crime and policing in the Netherlands (Pakes, 2005), compared to Britain, the Dutch political system itself remains much more weighted against the introduction of radical change and reform. Particularly when it comes to 'market-based' reforms to policing, the less marked developments in the Netherlands may reflect a more deep-seated suspicion of devolving core governmental powers to commercial corporations than exists in the UK. The private security industry has always been subject to much more regulation than its counterpart in more laissez-faire Britain, and there is much more political controversy surrounding the incursion of commercial security operatives into the traditional public sphere of residential streets and parks. The same issue applies to reforms that allow the police to sell their services to private buyers. This reflects a different political conception of the state as the unambiguous controller of the public sphere, and a degree of caution about allowing profit-making companies to deliver what are still viewed as quintessentially 'public' services. Although privatization has certainly occurred in the Netherlands, it remains a significantly more 'welfare-oriented' society, with higher levels of public spending as a proportion of GDP, and much less in the way of contracting-out of local government services. In terms of pluralization, whilst some aspects of these wider shifts are visible in the Netherlands, the distinctive political culture and institutional framework have moderated their extent, when set against developments in England & Wales.

## **5. Conclusions**

This paper has described the growth of plural policing in the Netherlands and Britain, and has discussed explanations for this growth. The focus has been, therefore, on the common features of the British and Dutch experiences. However, despite similar trends towards 'plural' and 'private' policing, the paper has also highlighted some important differences between the changes in policing in the Netherlands and Britain respectively. In particular, the expansion of private security, whilst significant, has been noticeably less striking in the Netherlands, most clearly in numerical terms, but also in terms of the spatial and functional reach of the contract security industry. In addition, there has been a much more radical approach to the privatization of the public sector more generally (and policing in particular) in Britain than in the Netherlands. The marketization of policing – both in terms of contracting out of public policing functions and in terms of the application of performance measures to the police service- has been more far-reaching in Britain than in the Dutch context. Thus, whilst the overall picture – the trends towards privatization and pluralization and the broad structural explanations for this – is one of similarity, important areas of

difference remain. Although there is not the space to consider this in detail here, we believe that these differences reflect the important political and cultural differences between the two countries. In particular, the distinctive Dutch system of political compromise and accommodation simultaneously places the central state as the ultimate arbiter of the 'public good' as well as placing formidable obstacles in the way of radical political reforms, such as occurred in Britain during the 1980s. Within policing and security, this more cautious approach to especially private policing is visible in a number of ways. The Dutch private security industry has always been subject to more stringent legal regulations than in Britain, and there is much more political controversy surrounding the incursion of commercial security operatives into the conventional public sphere of, for example, residential areas. Thus, in spite of strong areas of convergence, in terms of the overall growth of plural forms of policing, the persistence of divergence in policing trajectories emphasizes the importance of the need for detailed cross national studies that take account of differences, as well as similarity. Specifically, a more detailed analysis of political and cultural factors can serve as a good starting point for further comparative research.

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